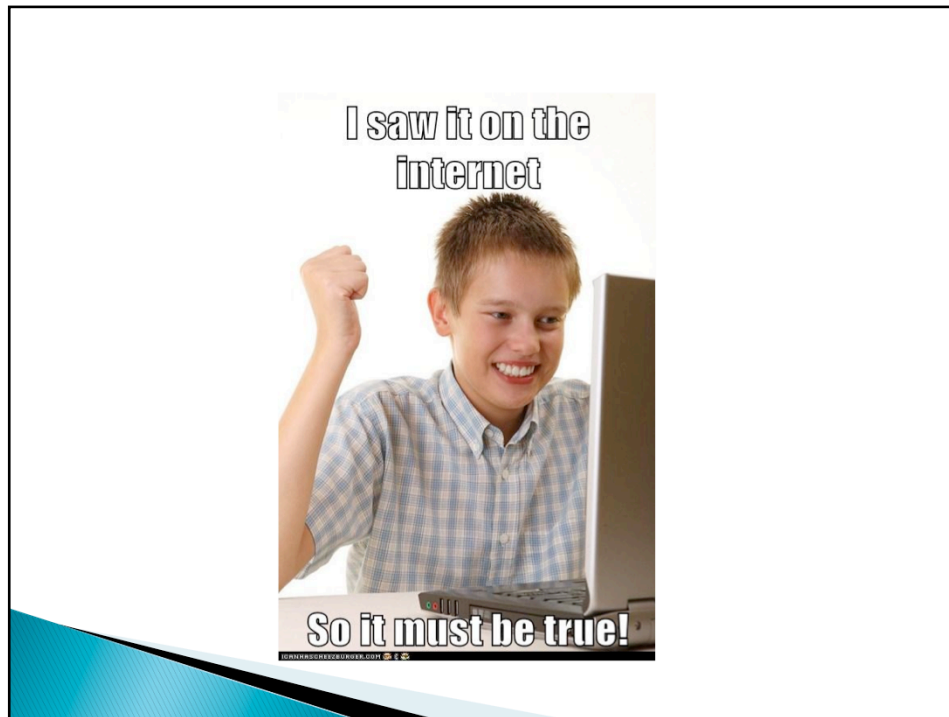
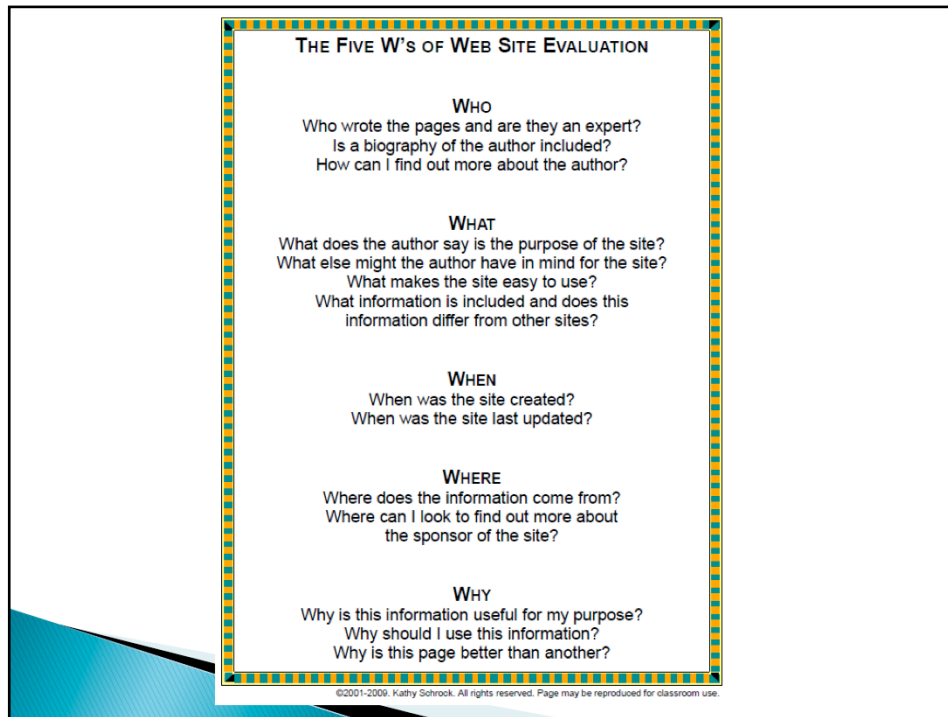


How to Evaluate Websites



So many people believe that if information is found on the internet, then it must be true. Not only is this not true, but it is such a common belief among the general public. Hopefully, this tutorial will help you determine what information on the internet is true and what information is not. The goal of this tutorial is to help you evaluate different websites on the internet.



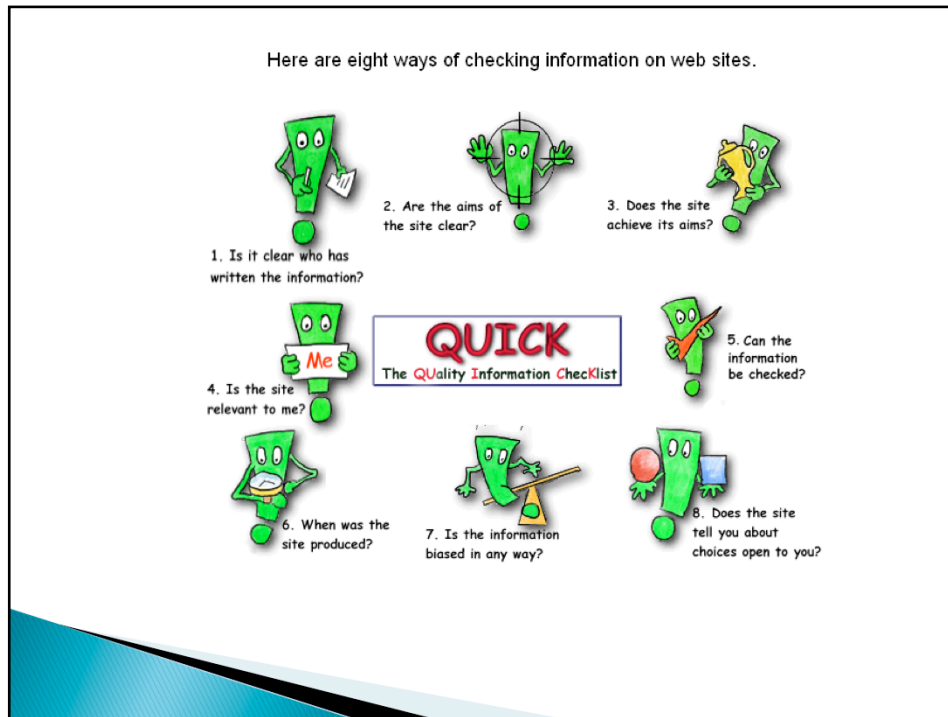
When evaluating a website, Kathy Schrock's "Five W's of Web Site Evaluation" are a helpful tool. Asking the basic questions – who, what, when, where, and why will help determine the credibility of the website you are viewing.

- Who is the author of the website and what is his/her background?
- What is the purpose of the website? Is the site trying to sell you something or is it biased?
- When was the site created? Has it been updated recently?
- Where does the information come from? Are there links to other resources?
- Why is this page better than similar pages?

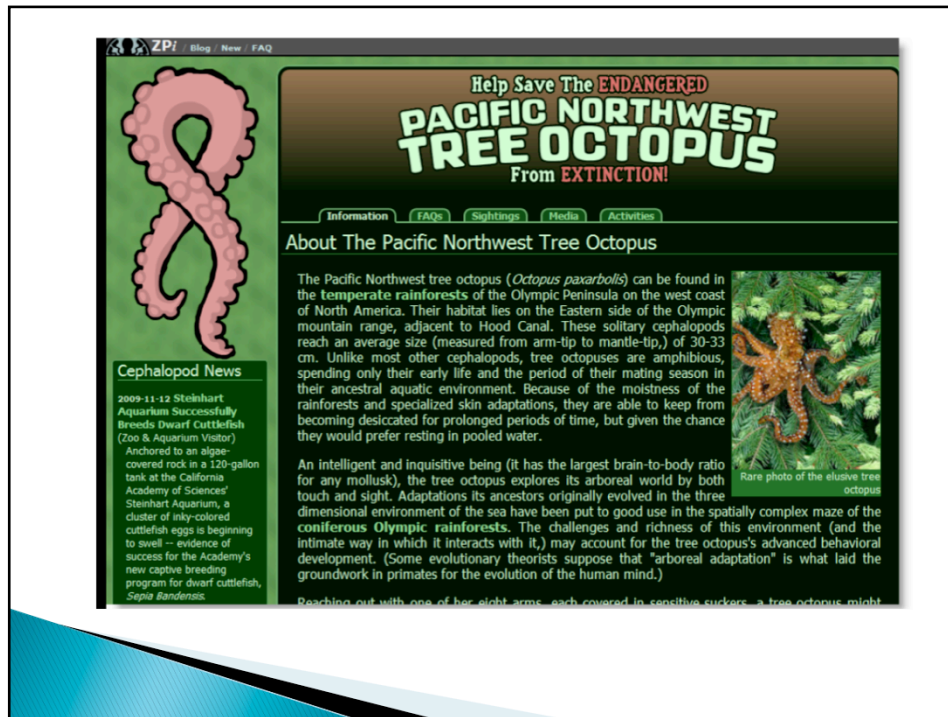
If you are doing research, then it is necessary to evaluate each website asking yourself these five questions to determine the website's credibility. If you are unable to locate the answer to any of these questions (or the answers you find are not reliable), then you may need to look for another website resource.



At a quick glance, the website “All About Explorers” looks like a credible site. However, after further investigation we find that the information provided is incorrect. If Christopher Columbus sailed in 1492, then it is not possible for him to have been born in 1951. If you read further down the page, the website states that Columbus appeared on infomercials. Using what we already know about historical facts that are common knowledge, we can determine that this site is not credible. Be careful, there are many sites like this on the internet. It is important to actually read what is provided on the website. Do a little digging. Answer Kathy Schrock’s 5 Questions. Compare what you find to what you already know to be true. If it doesn’t add up, then move your search elsewhere.



Another useful tool for evaluating websites is the QUICK Quality Information Checklist. If you are looking for quality information (reliable, credible), then ask yourself these 8 questions about the website you are viewing. Very similar to Kathy Schrock's "Five W's of Website Evaluation", the QUICK checklist simplifies the questions for evaluating a website. These questions also look at a website's relevance to the user.



Another example of a misleading website is the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus site. The site claims that this creature is endangered. You may be asking yourself, “Who ever heard of an octopus that lives in a forest?” This question should be your first clue that this website is a hoax. If you are feeling a little gullible and are tempted that this might even remotely be possible, evaluate the website. Investigate to learn more about the author of the site. Where did the author get this information? Remember, use a critical eye when visiting internet sites for research or even for personal use. All it takes is one person to believe what they read on the internet for false information to be spread.

Use caution when searching on the Internet



Remember...use caution when searching on the internet. Be a detective when evaluating websites. Don't take everything at face value. Ask questions. It is easy to become overwhelmed by the vast amount of information available on the internet. If you keep these things in mind, your research experience should be successful.

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